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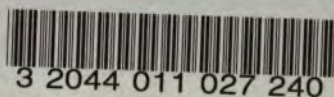
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# A DISCOURSE

ON THE

Character and Death

OF

# JOHN BROWN.

Delivered in Martinsburgh, N. Y. Dec. 12, 1859.

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BY S. H. TAFT,

*Pastor of the Church of Martinsburgh.*

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"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."

SECOND EDITION.-- PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

With an Introduction by the Reverend J. H. Morison, D. D.

DES MOINES;

STEAM PRINTING HOUSE OF CARTER, HUSSEY AND CURT.

1872.

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Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

BEQUEATHED BY HIS DAUGHTER

Alice M. Longfellow

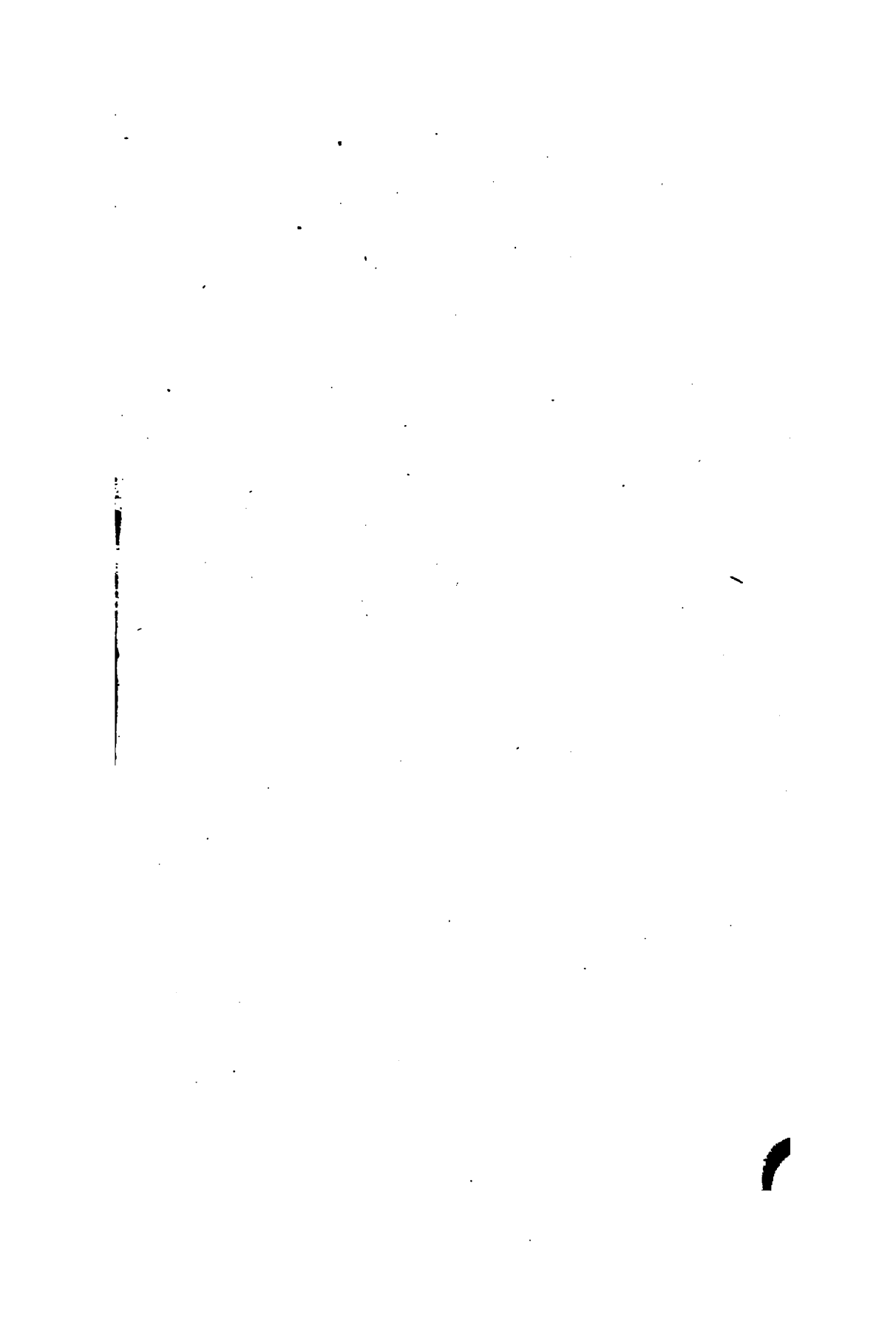
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1872, Nov. 25.

Gift of  
Prof. Henry H. Longfellow.  
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## PREFATORY.

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My "Discourse on the Character and Death of John Brown" was published immediately after its delivery, in compliance with the wishes of a very few radical abolitionists. It was favorably noticed by the *New York Independent* and some other public journals, by reason of which I received numerous orders for it from all parts of the Northern States, which soon exhausted the edition. In the summer of 1860 I also received letters from Hon. Gerrit Smith, Rev. Dr. Cheever, and other leading abolitionists, expressing hearty approval of the discourse, after which it slumbered for six years almost as quietly as "John Brown's body—in the grave." But since the close of the war I have received numerous letters asking for copies of it, for which reason I have had published this second edition.

I have taken the liberty of publishing herewith one of the letters above referred to, as also an introduction by my revered friend Dr. J. H. Morison, of Boston.

S. H. TAFT.

*Springvale, Iowa, March 21st, 1872.*

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## METROPOLITAN NATIONAL BANK,

NEW YORK, February 12th, 1872.

REV. S. H. TAFT:

*My Dear Sir:* I send herewith the John Brown sermon. Accept our thanks for the privilege of seeing what you said in those troublous times, of the scenes of deep interest then transpiring.

A friend seeing it on my desk wished very much to have it to send abroad, to a friend of Lord Byron. I told him it was your only copy. He said his friend Mr. J. E. T., of England, had a portrait of John Brown, and was a great admirer of his, for which reason he wished to send him the sermon—which my friend has read and likes very much.

He has given me a check for \$100 (which I enclose), and in return wishes a copy of the sermon, if it can be obtained.

Yours truly,

J. E. WILLIAMS.

## INTRODUCTION.

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MILTON, Mass., March 18th, 1872.

REV. S. H. TAFT:

*My Dear Sir:* I am glad that you are to have a new edition of your John Brown sermon published. I can easily understand the feelings of the New York gentleman who sent you a hundred dollars for the last copy you had of the old edition. It seems to me, considering the time and circumstances under which it was delivered, a remarkable production — one of the mysterious prophetic utterances made under the impulse of a Higher Spirit than man's, which preceded the downfall of slavery. The way in which John Brown's name and acts, apparently so insignificant in themselves, connected themselves with the uprising of a great nation against the terrible wrong, his soul "marching on" the animating spirit in more than a million armed men, would be thought fabulous and incredible, if such an event had been narrated as belonging to the early history of Palestine and Rome.

What you say of Governor Wise reminds me of an incident related by a rebel officer during the war. Governor Wise's son was killed and his body prepared for burial. The father bent over the body with a look and with words of the deepest anguish and then fell senseless to the ground. The officer added, that at that moment he could not but think of the time when he had seen the Governor coldly repel the request of his daughter who kneeled before her father and begged him to spare the life of John Brown. So the ways of God and of good men vindicate themselves sooner or later, and the foolishness of the faithful and simple ones is found to be wiser than the wisdom of the prudent. So right prevails over wrong. Love is mightier than hatred. One man upon the gallows, with his great loving heart, (madman though he seems to thousands,) is stronger than all that can be arrayed against him. John Brown made a mistake, I think, in taking into his own private hands the responsibility of destroying life. His power when he had been disarmed, imprisoned and condemned was greater than it had ever been before, and ten thousand times greater when he had been made a martyr in the cause of liberty.

I thank you for doing something to refresh our memories by bringing before us again so vividly the image of one whose name has been identified with the greatest movement of our age.

Very truly yours,

JOHN H. MORISON.

## JOHN BROWN.

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My text this afternoon, my hearers, is, "JOHN BROWN." You will find it recorded in all the newspapers of the land; and it will yet be inscribed in bold characters on the record of the World's History!

Ten days ago, just before the sun had reached the meridian, in the village of Charlestown, in the State of Virginia, John Brown—an aged man, with hair and beard as white as the snows which robe our Northern hills—was ignominiously hung by the neck, between the heavens and the earth, until he was dead.

As all civilized nations agree that the death penalty, if inflicted at all, can properly be inflicted only upon the most guilty of men, in punishment for the highest of crimes, the question suggests itself to every candid mind: "Who is John Brown, and what are the crimes for which he has been executed?"

With regard to the first question, I remark, John Brown was born in Connecticut, in the year 1796. He early emigrated to Massachusetts, and thence to this State, where he lived until slavery (seconded by Douglas and other Northern men, who were willing to sell their country's freedom for a mess of political pottage,) put forth its ruthless hand to plant the Upas of Slavery on the virgin soil of Kansas, when he emigrated there and confronted the minions of despotism on their own chosen battle-ground.

Suffering severe losses in Kansas by the civil war which raged there, he returned to this State with his family. Leaving them at North Elba, Essex county, he went to Maryland and entered upon his preparation for taking Harper's ferry, of which attack, my hearers, you all know, but of the *full result* of which little can be known at the present time.

John Brown was the grandson of a revolutionary soldier, and the sixth from Peter Brown, one of the Pilgrim fathers, who landed at Plymouth in the year 1620. So you observe, my hearers, that royal blood coursed in his veins, as we count royalty.

To answer with any degree of completeness the second question, viz.: what has he done for which he has been put to death? would require much time. I shall be able therefore, on the present occasion, to reply but briefly. As his acts at Harper's Ferry were but a continuation of a series of like acts, I shall have to go back a few years and speak of his Kansas work. For be it known, my hearers, that John

Brown was not executed for his tragic conquest of Harper's Ferry; he was taken prisoner, tried and condemned, for *this*; but he was *executed* for having driven the myrmidons of slavery from Kansas.

His Spartan bravery, Cromwellian integrity, and Puritanic simplicity and faith, won for him the admiration even of his bitterest foes, and Slavery has not yet so wholly eaten out the better impulses of humanity in the Southern heart, but that many desired that the noble old man should have been pardoned, and Governor Wise and the Legislature of Virginia would gladly have sought to cover the record of their cowardice and shame, with the magnanimity which a pardon would have displayed, if only the daring deeds of Harper's Ferry had been present before their minds. But *they* remembered, the *whole slave oligarchy* remembered, that to John Brown, more than any other man, the slave power owed its signal defeat in Kansas. Such a crime could know *no forgiveness*, neither in the gubernatorial mansion nor in the Legislative Halls of Virginia.

When the marauding hordes led on by Atchison, Stringfellow and others were pouring into Kansas to overthrow the three great bulwarks of liberty—freedom of speech, freedom of the press and the ballot-box—Mr. Brown gathered around him a band of faithful, upright men (for he would never allow a profane or unprincipled man in his camp), and went forth to defend the right. So successfully did he contend with the foe, that his name became at once a tower of strength to the Free-State party, while it inspired corresponding terror in the hearts of the slaveholder and his allies.

His defense of Lawrence against a large force of Missourians, who marched upon it soon after the Shannon treaty, was the turning point in the contest between slavery and freedom in that Territory. Mr. Brown continued his labors until the ballot-box was restored, and the lip and press made free. He then crossed the borders into Missouri, and, Moses-like, led forth some of God's poor and oppressed children from the land of bondage, and conducted them safely to a land of freedom. The result of this has been to drive slavery almost wholly out of the Western and Northern portions of the State.

A Southern writer lately said that the decrease of slavery in Missouri is so rapid that "Whole counties would soon be without a single bondman." The act for which he was sentenced to suffer death upon the scaffold is known to you, my hearers. He made a descent upon Harper's Ferry, with a force of twenty-two men (himself included), took possession of the United States Arsenal, made prisoners of the first citizens of the place, as a means of delivering from a life-long imprisonment the victims of Southern slavery, his object in taking prisoners being to exchange them for slaves, which were by this means to be set free.

Looking upon slavery as a system of *oullawry*, and as such having no rights which God recognizes, or man "is bound to respect," he espoused the cause of the weak and outraged party, and laid his life

and the life of his sons upon the altar of *freedom*. His own emphatic language, when asked what he sought to do, was, "I claim to be here in carrying out a measure I believe to be perfectly justifiable; not to act the part of an incendiary or ruffian, but to aid those suffering great wrong."

But can we confide in Mr. Brown's testimony? Certainly, for Governor Wise himself said he would believe him under *any circumstances*.

For such deeds as I have enumerated, and for such only, has John Brown been put to death.

I am aware that in order to detract from his influence, some have denounced him as a madman; but where is the evidence? Is it found in the manner in which he defended the interests of freedom in Kansas? No other man displayed equal wisdom and ability in that dark day of her history.

Is the evidence of his madness found in the success which attended his attack on Harper's Ferry? With twenty-one men he captured a United States Arsenal, took over forty prisoners, and held possession of a town of over two thousand inhabitants, until overpowered by the united forces which the Federal Government, Virginia and Maryland sent against him. Certainly, there must be great method in such madness.

The fact, then, of his attacking slavery in its own stronghold, with so small a force, is all that can be regarded as furnishing any evidence of madness.

That he was deceived by Mr. Cook, in relation to the readiness of the slave population in Virginia and Maryland to strike for freedom, he stated to that gentleman in his last interview with him. But not for once did he repine at his fate; not for once did he express regret for what he had done.

So far from it, he used the following emphatic—may I not say *prophetic*?—language in a letter written to his old teacher, Rev. H. L. Vail, of Connecticut: "Before I commenced my work at Harper's Ferry, I felt assured that in the worst event it would certainly pay. I often expressed that belief, and I can now see no possible reason to alter my mind." There are others who charge Mr. Brown with having acted in a spirit of revenge. A more groundless charge was never made. That slaveholders and their abettors should have expected vengeance at his hands, is not surprising, for he had suffered wrongs at the hands of the slave power which would have either crushed or driven to madness most men. One of his sons was seized upon and assassinated in Kansas in open day; another, who was a member of the Legislature under the Topeka Constitution, was arrested at Ossawatimie on a charge of treason; his feet and hands were bound together with an ox chain, and he was compelled to walk the whole distance to Leocompton, under a burning sun, the iron wearing the flesh from his ankles. His sufferings brought on a brain fever from



which, in a few days he died; and one of his daughters was seized upon in the night time, dragged from her father's dwelling by Missourian ruffians, and treated in a manner which would have disgraced the inhabitants of the Feejee Islands. But notwithstanding these and other barbarities of a like character, which he had suffered at the hands of slavery, not for once in all that sanguinary struggle at Harper's Ferry did he stoop to an act of vengeful cruelty. All his prisoners testify that he treated them with the utmost kindness, and that too, notwithstanding his own son was shot down while bearing a flag of truce, and young Thompson was inhumanly murdered by those who had taken him prisoner. No, my hearers, John Brown exhibited no spirit of cruelty or revenge in any of all his acts. In his charge to his men, before the attack, he said: "Remember that the lives of others are as precious to them as yours are to you." When the attack was made upon him by the marines, he spared the lives of Major Russell and Lieutenant Stewart when they were wholly in his power, for which the Major thanked him. Whatever may be said by those at the North who barter conscience and freedom for slaveholding favor, the South admit that he acted magnanimously and bravely towards his fallen foe. But I should fail alike to do justice to the dead and the cause to promote which he offered up his life if I should fail to notice, more particularly, the motives which actuated him in the work to which he devoted the last years of his life; for in the light of those motives history will judge him. But before we can wisely judge his motives, we must inquire into the character of the system which he sought to overthrow.

What is slavery? Webster defines it as "a state of entire subjugation of one person to the will of another." Our ears have become so familiar with the term that it excites but little emotion when we hear it pronounced. But, my hearers, if the dealer in the bodies and souls of men was to enter this house to-day, and, with sufficient force to accomplish his dark purpose, proceed to put the clanking chains upon your limbs, you would begin better to understand the import of the word "Slavery." And as the door of slavery's dark prison house should open to receive you, your trembling limbs, *blanched cheeks* and *chattering teeth* would proclaim you an *abolitionist*, whatever the indifference with which you might have been wont to look upon the woes of Southern slaves. Slavery is a system which curses both the master and the slave. It does more than this — in the end it no less certainly brings ruin upon all who stand by and permit the strong to overpower and subjugate the weak, for whoever tamely consents to the enslavement of others, permits the forging of chains for his children's limbs by permitting the bulwarks which protect his own freedom to be overthrown. It does even *more than this* — it so debauches the moral sense of such as look on with indifference as to fit them to become the willing slaves of slavery. Thus has it come to pass that our Northern States have become one vast Golgotha on which bleach the moral skeletons of

those who once promised to honor our nation and bless humanity. I will not attempt to name those in church and state whom slavery has slain, for they are legions. Yet I cannot forbear referring to one of them. Like the one whose obsequies we to-day celebrate, he was a New England man, who, instead of seeking to liberate Southern slaves, forged heavy chains for Northern freemen, and "Let loose the hungry pack to hunt down freedom in her chosen land." He was a man whose large and lustrous eyes looked forth from underneath a brow towering and noble like the mountains of his native State. He was gifted by nature with such unequalled powers of thought that had he lived in the days of Greece or Rome he would have been assigned a place among the gods. But slavery led him (not into an exceeding high mountain, but) out upon a lovely plain, and showed him (not all the kingdoms of the world, but) all the glories of the—Presidency, and said, "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me," and he took the glory of his great name, the honor of his country, and the last hope of the fleeing bondman, and offering them as sacrifices, he bowed low and worshipped before slavery's bloody altar, and Freedom wept when Daniel Webster fell.

"So fall'n, so lost, the light withdrawn  
Which once he wore,  
The glory from his gray hairs gone  
Forevermore."

Slavery conspires as much against the manhood of the master as of the slave, for no man can put fetters upon the limbs of his fellow man until he has first bowed his moral nature to the slavery of selfishness; he must first mortgage his own soul to the Devil before he can either take or execute a bill of sale of his brother.

Slavery blights every green thing in all the South; the mildew which it begets rests upon the roads, fields and houses, manufactories and post-offices, school-houses, literature and religion of the Southern states. All the great men of the South twenty-five years ago looked upon slavery as an evil and a sin; her ruling spirits now profess to defend it as a right—so fearfully has the moral sentiment of the South been debauched within a quarter of a century.

Such are some of the bitter fruits which others besides the bondman have reaped from slavery.

Well might Cowper exclaim:

"I would not have a slave to till my ground,  
To carry me—to fan me, when I sleep,  
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth  
That sinews, bought or sold, have ever earned."

The immediate victims of slavery are despoiled of every right. No pen, though dipped in blood, could draw a picture of their wrongs. First, they are compelled to labor for life, without wages. Second, they are denied education. Third, they cannot own their own children, neither can they protect them. A few weeks ago Mr. Manuel, a

colored man in Washington, was fined \$200 for giving shelter to his own son, who was a slave and fleeing from bondage. On failing to pay his fine he was last week thrust into prison where he is at present. Fourth, they have no protection in the courts. Fifth, they may not exercise the right of self-defense. Sixth, they are huddled together in a state of promiscuous concubinage. Seventh, if they attempt to escape from their dark prison-house, they are liable to be pursued by hounds, or to be shot down like beasts of prey. Eighth, they may at any time, as the caprice or self interests of the master demands, be handcuffed like felons, and driven far from family and friends, never to return.

What wonder, I ask, that Jefferson, in view of such dark and unmitigated crimes against humanity, exclaimed, "I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just, and that His justice cannot sleep forever."

One fact more in relation to slavery demands our notice, ere we pass judgment upon the motives which must have actuated Mr. Brown in his war upon it, viz.: it is a system irreconcilably antagonistic to freedom, and will, if much longer permitted to exist *anywhere* in the United States, secure and exercise control *everywhere*. I might make an argument in proof of this position, drawn both from the nature of slavery, and from the history of its past aggressions. But I prefer to refer you to the testimony of others on this point. I could call forward many distinguished witnesses, but shall content myself with introducing but two: one from the South, the other from the North. The former of them a defender of slavery, the latter of freedom.

The *Richmond Enquirer* (one of the ablest, if not *the* ablest paper in all the South) holds the following language: "Two opposite and conflicting forms of society cannot, among civilized men, co-exist and endure. The one must give way and *cease to exist*; the *other* becomes *universal*."

Wm. H. Seward declared a short time since, "That the United States must and will, sooner or later, become either entirely a *slaveholding*, or entirely a *free labor nation*. Either the cotton and rice fields of South Carolina, and the sugar plantations of Louisiana, will ultimately be tilled by free labor, and Charleston and New Orleans become marts for legitimate merchandise, or else the rye fields and wheat fields of Massachusetts and New York must again be rendered up by the farmers to slave culture, and Boston and New York become once more *markets for trade in the bodies and souls of men*." \*

Thus do you observe, my hearers, that slavery wars not only upon the most sacred interests of all classes, but that it is freedom's deadliest foe.

And it was for seeking the speedy overthrow of this "sum of all villainies" that *John Brown* has been *doomed* to an *ignominious death*.

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\* A similar prophetic declaration was found, in language no less emphatic, in a speech of Abraham Lincoln's delivered at a still earlier date.

Senator Broderick, of California, said as his dying words, "They have killed me because I was opposed to the *extension* of slavery." They have killed John Brown because he was opposed to the *existence* of slavery.

If "Oppression maketh a wise man mad," what wonder that the destruction of such a man under such circumstances should overwhelm with anguish the great-souled philanthropist of our State, Gerrit Smith?

But who, I ask, died the most desirable, the most honorable death — Senator Broderick, who offered up his life in obedience to the demand of the "bloody code," or Mr. Brown, who offered up his life on the altar of humanity's freedom?

The light in which Mr. Brown regarded slavery may be judged not more by the sacrifices which he made to secure its overthrow, than by the outspoken testimony which he bore against it during his imprisonment, and upon the scaffold.

In the course of conversation between him and the Rev. Mr. Waugh, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in his prison, the reverend gentleman spoke in defense of slavery, to which Mr. Brown replied, "You have not yet learned the A - B - C of Christianity; you may be a gentleman, but *you are not a Christian—you are a Heathen Gentleman.*"

When interrogated in regard to his being attended by a clergyman upon the scaffold, he replied, "I wish for the prayers of no man who believes slavery right. If an old slave mother, with a dozen poor slave children might be permitted to follow me to the scaffold, it would be a gratification to me—I should rather have their sympathies and prayers than the prayers of all the pro-slavery ministers in the United States."

He said of his two sons who fell by his side at Harper's Ferry, "I do not regret their loss; they have died in a noble cause."

We find, then, that, whether judged by the work in which he was engaged, by the manner and spirit in which he prosecuted it, or by his dying testimony, Mr. Brown was actuated by the purest and most exalted motives.

But is it charged that he violated law? That he violated statute enactments, is true. And so did the Prophets; so did the Apostles; so did the Saviour of men.

The successive steps which the human race have taken in the ever ascending pathway of progress and freedom, either in Church or State, have not been taken by virtue of legislative enactments.

The TRUE reformers of ALL ages have always been in advance of legislation, and the great acts of their lives have always been independent of, and often in opposition to, statute enactments. If John Brown was a law-breaker, then were Amram and Jockabed; so were Moses and Daniel; so were Peter and John; so were all the martyrs of all ages.

If John Brown deserved death, then much more did Warren,

Adams, Jefferson, Hancock and Washington, for they rebelled against the unjust taxation of the purse; but John Brown rebelled against the "sum of all villainies."

Thus you observe, my hearers, that those who are *law-abiding* in the high and true sense of the term, are often compelled to be *law-breakers* in the low and vulgar sense in which the term is too often used.

With much force has humanity's poet, J. G. Whittier, presented this truth in the following lines:

"Right, forever on the scaffold; wrong, forever on the throne;  
But the scaffold sways the fetters, and behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God beyond the shadows, keeping watch above His own."

But did John Brown do right in seeking to aid the slave by force, in obtaining his freedom? is a question asked by ten thousand lips. The non-resistant answers, *No*. The man who believes in the authority of Might over Right answers, *No*. The man who believes that the enactments of wicked men are of higher obligation than the law of the Changeless and Holy God, answers, *No*.

But those who believe in self-defense and the Golden Rule, answer, *Yes*, John Brown did right to take his life in his hands, and, entering the dark prison-houses of bondage, seek to break off the fetters of the slave, and "Let the oppressed go free." In so doing he performed an act of disinterested heroism, which challenges the admiration of all who can appreciate exalted virtue; an act which shall secure for him an immortality of fame.

And he has not to slumber long years in the grave before his work for freedom shall be appreciated. His noble deeds and heroic utterances have, by the aid of steam and telegraph, been borne to all parts of our land: and the public prints are speaking out boldly in reference to him.

*The New York Independent* holds the following language in relation to him: "The brave old man who lies in prison at Charlestown, Virginia, awaiting the day of his execution, is teaching this nation lessons of heroism, faith and duty, which will awaken its sluggish moral sense, and the almost forgotten memories of the heroes of the Revolution. \*

\* \* His brief address to the Virginia Court about to sentence him for unproved crimes, which at the worst were acts of devotion to freedom and humanity, will outlive that sentence, and in the opinion of mankind make Brown the Judge and the Court the criminal. \*

\* \* Calm, self-consistent, courteous towards his accusers and his judge, benignant in feeling towards all men, mild and patient under personal injuries; yet inflexibly committed to the cause of human freedom; undaunted by the presence of death; despising every subterfuge and expedient for his own deliverance; conscious of the purity of his motives and the essential rightness of his object; faithful in God as his trust, he stands not only a brave man in a community of cowards, but a *moral hero* and prophet, in a nation of 'Sophists, economists and calculators.' "

I was pleased to observe that he is spoken of in the last issue of the *Republican*, of our own village, as being "As noble-hearted a Christian as ever suffered martyrdom."

I could multiply, almost indefinitely, quotations of a like character, from the most influential public journals of the land; but I forbear, and pass to the consideration of another question, viz.: Was it wise for John Brown to attack slavery *when* and *where* he did?

A majority of the American people have answered *No*.

John Brown has answered *Yes*, and sealed his testimony with his blood. Who shall decide between the witnesses?

Remember, my hearers, that what was the folly of yesterday, shall be crowned as the wisdom of to-morrow.

Those acts which have been considered as unwise and rash, when put forth, have often proved to be golden links in the chain with which God was binding earth to heaven.

Christianity and freedom would have had no martyrs if only the wisdom of the majority had been consulted. Even the Lord Jesus Christ might have avoided the ignominious death which he suffered if he had only acted wisely as the majority judged.

Whoever recognizes the presence of God, in the affairs of men and nations, should pause long before pronouncing the act for which Mr. Brown was sentenced to death as unwise.

It seemed unwise that Paul appealed from Festus to Cæsar, since he would have been set at liberty if he had not; but by virtue of that appeal the standard of the cross was planted in the very heart of the Roman Empire, and Cæsar's own household was brought under the influence of the Gospel. It seemed unwise and rash in Crispus Attucks, a colored man, to attack the British soldiery in Boston; yet Daniel Webster said that from the day of the Boston massacre dated the disruption of the British Empire. If the attack of a colored man on the English soldiery at Boston resulted in the overthrow of British rule in America, why, I ask, may not the attack of a white man on the slaveholders at Harper's Ferry result in the overthrow of slavery in the United States.

I confidently believe that the revelation of the future will prove that John Brown was a chosen instrument in the hands of God to accomplish the speedy overthrow of slavery in America.

But much has already been accomplished by the heroic deeds of the brave old man: he has torn off the covering with which slavery had veiled itself, and exposed to view its weakness and hideous deformity. Its weakness is seen in the fact that twenty-two men have sent a thrill of terror through all the South.

Governor Wise admits that "Henceforth no slaves can be retained in bondage in the border counties unless they are disposed to stay."

When the wounded old man arose from his bed, and gave his reasons why the sentence of death should not be pronounced against him, his simple, truthful words inspired such fear in the heart of the officer in

command, that he at once gave orders that the force on guard should be increased.

The following from the *Richmond Enquirer* is an undisguised acknowledgment of the inability of slavery to defend itself:

"What have the Governors of Pennsylvania and Ohio done to protect a sister State from the lawlessness of their own people? And what has the President of the United States done to protect a sovereign State from lawless invasion? *Nothing*. We have been left to our own resources just as though Ohio and Pennsylvania were hostile States, and no confederation existed."

The paper which puts forth this cry for help, is edited by a son of Governor Wise.

Another Southern paper, the *Wheeling (Va.) Intelligencer*, holds the following language relative to the stability and safety of slaveholding society:

"Scarcely less secure are those people who work by day and sleep by night underneath the craters of Vesuvius and *Ætna*, and who are liable to an eruption at any moment of burning lava, than many communities of the Southern States where the slaves number two or three to one of the whites. Jefferson, up to the time of his dying hour, never ceased to express his apprehension of a great San Domingo rebellion."

Such are some of the acknowledgments of weakness which the late attack upon slavery has drawn forth from the South.

I said that the horrid deformity of slavery had also been exposed by the occurrences at Harper's Ferry. It has revealed its jealousy, its cowardice, and its barbarity. In speaking of these three characteristics of oppression, I shall hardly be able to tell you where jealousy ends and cowardice begins, or where cowardice ends and barbarity begins; for they are three *grim-visaged monsters* of the pit; so at one in spirit and purpose that they form a bloody, soulless trinity, in fellowship with which no generous impulse can live, no seed of sympathy grow.

Such incidents as the following very forcibly reveal the jealousy and cowardice of slavery:

A citizen of Virginia is heard to speak of Mr. Brown as an honest man. He has to flee or be imprisoned.

Two Cincinnati merchants, when riding in the cars, are heard to express sympathy with Mr. Brown and his family. They are at once seized upon, dragged from the cars, and thrust into prison at Harper's Ferry.

A part of a letter is picked up in the highway, on which is neither name or date; but on it is found written the simple sentence, "We can accomplish our work in six hours." The handwriting upon the wall of Belshazzar's banquet hall inspired not more terror than these ominous words. The whole community is astir, and guards are stationed in all directions.

A wheat stack is found to be on fire: "The wildest terror prevails, and thousands of men are at once put under arms."

On the day of execution, Governor Wise, fearing that Mr. Brown might say something that would endanger the stability of slavery, orders that the soldiers be so posted that neither they nor any of the people should be able to hear anything that might be said from the scaffold.

Pity Governor Wise had not lived in the days of Pilate; he would have managed the crucifixion better than Pilate did, for he would have protected society from the spread of the heretical and dangerous doctrines taught by the Saviour, by permitting none to approach near enough the cross to hear Him.

In the light of such revelations of the jealousy and cowardice of slavery, we wonder not that John Randolph said that "The fire-bell never rings at night in Richmond, but that the mother clasps her infant closer to her breast in fear of an insurrection."

But the revelation which has been made of the barbarity of slavery is the most appalling. It has proved to be more relentless than the ferocity of the savage.

Many years ago, when Indian chiefs ruled in Virginia, instead of Governor Wise, a gallant captain by the name of John Smith — instead of John Brown — was tried before a council of chiefs, and sentenced to death. When the hour of execution came, he was led forth amid the war-whoops of the exultant savages, and his head laid upon the stone. The war-club — the instrument of death — was raised; but ere it descended, an Indian girl rushed between the executioner and his victim and, bending over the prostrate captive, she folded his head in her arms, and pleaded for his life. Her prayer was granted, and Smith was released and conducted in safety to his home.

Such was Virginia chivalry and magnanimity two hundred and fifty years ago, under Indian rule. Let us compare with it the deeds of Virginians of to-day, under slaveholding rule.

A young man by the name of Thompson was taken prisoner at Harper's Ferry. He was wholly in the power of his captors. There was no possibility of his escape; yet it appeared from the testimony of Mr. Hunter, son of the prosecuting attorney, that he in company with others entered the room where Thompson was confined, and, putting the muzzle of his gun near to his head, sought to take his life; on seeing which, a young lady (Miss Foulk) sprang forward, turned aside the weapon of death, and, folding the prisoner's head in her arms, as Pocahontas did Captain Smith's in hers, she pleaded that his life should be spared until he had been tried. Where is now the *chivalry*, where the *mercy* which dwelt in the bosom of the savage in the days of Powhatan? *Gone, quite gone!* Eaten out by the barbarism of slavery. She was rudely thrust aside, the prisoner seized upon, dragged from the room, and ruthlessly murdered in the public street!

Mr. Brown said to Colonel Stewart, in reference to the treatment which he received after his surrender: "These wounds were inflicted upon me — both sabre-cuts on my head and bayonet stabs in various



parts of my body — some minutes after I had ceased fighting, and consented to surrender for the benefit of others, not for my own."

And then the manner in which his trial was conducted — what American does not blush in remembrance of it. He is brought into court ere he can stand or sit; he asks a little time that he may recover his memory and hearing, both of which he had nearly lost by reason of the loss of blood and inflammation resulting from the sabre-cuts on his head; but he asks in *vain*. He then asks a single day's delay, that he may procure counsel in which he can confide. This, also, is denied him; and he is put on trial for his life while lying on his couch covered with ghastly wounds! Surely "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." How has the glory of Virginia departed! Her Governor has doomed to death Columbia's noblest son.

Pilate, was an honorable man compared with Governor Wise, for he washed his hands after dooming to death one of whom he said, "I find no fault with this man." But Governor Wise, after delivering up to death one whom he admitted to be "The bravest and most truthful man he ever saw," instead of washing his hands, glories in his shame. Who would desire the immortality in store for Henry A. Wise?

But we commenced to speak of the disgrace into which Virginia had fallen. She has proved herself destitute alike of justice, courage and magnanimity. She should at once change and amplify the design upon her seal of State. It now represents a defender of liberty, with his foot upon the neck of a prostrate despot, by the side of whom are scattered broken fetters and chains, and her motto is "*Sic Semper Tyrannis*," ("Thus be it ever done to tyrants.") She should cut down with the sabre and pierce with the bayonet the John Brown who now stands upon the neck of tyranny, and lifting up the fallen despot, plant his iron heel in the vitals of prostrate liberty. By his side should stand the auction block, on which should be arranged a family of slaves, wearing on their limbs the mended manacles and chains. In the background should stand the gallows on which should be suspended the body of John Brown, and over it should be inscribed, "Thus be it ever done to the truthful and the brave." Such a design would be truthful to the life.

As we mourn over Virginia's degradation and shame, let us not forget that she is still great in the names of her illustrious dead. But let us

"Pay the reverence of old days to her dead fame;  
Walk backwards with averted gaze and hide her shame."

But I must pass to notice other and more interesting revelations, which have been made by the last acts and closing scenes of the life of him whom we mourn to-day. The simplicity which ran like a golden thread through all his acts and communications was not studied or assumed. It was my pleasure to meet and spend some hours with him in February, 1858, and if now asked what trait of character most deeply impressed me, I should answer, simplicity, combined with force.

Many have spoken of Mr. Brown's effort in behalf of the slaves as a failure. How little such persons know of the struggle of the right with the wrong, of truth with error, in the history of the past. They overlook the important fact that more often depends upon the power of one brave spirit to inspire courage and enthusiasm in the hearts of others, and carry terror into the ranks of the foe, than to victory gained in one or in a succession of battles.

Captain Lawrence was overpowered, and the Chesapeake taken by the Shannon. Was it unfortunate, therefore, that the Chesapeake sailed forth and attacked the Shannon? Did Captain Lawrence fail because he lost this battle and his life also? *Far from it*; for what, I ask, gave to Commodore Perry his victory on Lake Erie, the proudest achievement recorded in our naval history? I answer, the flag under which he fought. And what, I ask again, gave to the banner under which he fought its magic power to inspire the soldiery with indomitable courage, and irrepressible enthusiasm? 'T was the words of the dying Lawrence, "*Do n't give up the ship!*" So well did Commodore Perry understand that victory, if gained at all, must be gained in the name of the heroic Lawrence, that when the flag-ship was disabled, he carried the flag in an open boat to the Niagara, and when there was again seen floating in the breeze, the inspiring words of Lawrence, "*Do n't give up the ship!*" the Commodore knew from the shouts which rent the air that the *day was won*. Even so shall the brave deeds and heroic words of the martyred Brown give victory to the hosts of freedom in their battles with slavery at no very distant day. Well did the *Independent* say, "The day of John Brown's execution will be a sorry day for Virginia. Her Governor will see the ghost of Banquo in the council room, and in his very bed-chamber. Troops of imaginary terrors will scare sleep from the eyes of her slaveholders, and the blood of the hero will sow her soil with quick and direful retribution." The *Utica Herald* has said, "The negro's shout at Harper's Ferry, 'That he had been in bondage long enough,' will echo in many a slave cabin, down even to the Red River and the Gulf, and it will be long before the sleep of the slaveholder becomes again as profound and secure as before this outbreak."

A Southern correspondent of the *Tribune* remarks, "That the effect of the present excitement in the South upon the negro population will be injurious in the extreme." It will *indeed*, if it is injurious for the poor battered slave to know that he has friends who are willing to die for him, and to know that liberty is worth more than life.

The name of John Brown, my hearers, shall inspire hope and courage in the heart of many a weary bondman. It shall be the last word that the outraged slave will speak in the ear of his frantic wife, as she is torn from his arms to be borne away to the harem of some lordly master. Aye, his name shall be breathed in softest accents by the weeping slave-mother, into the ear of her darling child, when she clasps it to her bosom for the last time, before it is placed upon the

auction block and sold from her sight forever. Yes, John Brown shall, in a very important sense, yet prove a Messiah to the African race.

Much more has been accomplished than I have yet named; the Northern heart has been revealed, and with here and there an exception, it beats true to freedom. The South begins to see that she cannot much longer depend upon the North to supply her with hounds to keep guard about the citadel of slavery, and hunt down and drag back the fleeing bondman. It is seen that there are those at the North who are prepared to *act* against slavery, as well as to *talk* against it. This single fact will accomplish wonders for freedom. Political men have been greatly surprised at the spontaneous and almost universal sympathy expressed at the North for Mr. Brown. But these leaders have fallen behind the times in which they live, as King Charles the First fell behind the times in which he lived.

I would here remark that whoever would in the future accomplish anything for freedom, must marshal her hosts, not in the low marshes of expediency, wherever rise the miasm of selfishness, and where always blow the simoom from the rice-swamps of the South; but on the high table-lands of justice and truth, where always shines the sun of liberty, and ever blow the soul-invigorating breezes of freedom from our Northern hill-tops.

Surely, John Brown's battle with Slavery has not proved a failure, although, like other martyrs, he has fallen, ere victory perched upon his banner.

" His love of truth — too warm — too strong,  
For Hope or Fear to chain or chill;  
His hate of Tyranny or Wrong,  
Burn in the hearts he kindled still."

Governor Wise, on being asked a few days previous to the execution if he would pardon Brown, replied, "No, I will not," adding, "Why, John Brown has never asked to be pardoned." *No*, he preferred to die, bearing faithful testimony against oppression, to accepting life at the hands of the oppressor. To ask for freedom at the hands of such a man, would be to ask an impossibility; for how, I ask, could Governor Wise give freedom? — a man who stands with his iron heel upon the throbbing, bleeding heart of prostrate humanity. To assume the attitude of a suppliant at the feet of such a man, would be to offer up the undying soul as a sacrifice to slavery, to redeem the dying body from the gallows. Rather than ask for life of such an one, he preferred that his faithful wife, who had wept the loss of four noble sons, cloven down by the bloody hand of slavery, should robe herself in the habiliments of yet deeper mourning, as she should walk the descending pathway of her lonely life.

John Brown has reproduced before the world that grand and sublime type of moral heroism which dignifies humanity, and inspires anew in the heart of man his faith in God and Truth. He has done more to lift humanity up toward God than any other man of this age.

While defending the position which he had assumed at Harper's Ferry, one of his sons was shot down by his side and another one fell, but, lingering in agony, he asked his comrades to complete the work of death and end his sufferings. As they severally declined, he took his pistol from his belt, and was about to take his own life; seeing which the father reached forth and, staying his hand, said, "Not yet, my son; wait a little longer, and *you shall die as becomes a man.*"

When Gov. Wise paid him his first visit in prison, he said to him in that severe, vulgar manner, peculiar to the slaveholder in his intercourse with those in his power, "Well, old man, you had better prepare to die." To which Mr. Brown replied in a gentle, respectful voice, "I hope I am prepared for death; and now you will doubtless permit me to suggest that it is only a question of time with us all; and it is not probable that you will live to exceed fifteen years; you *may* live but a small part of that time. I submit whether it is not important that you, by a timely repentance of your sins, should prepare for that event."

Behold him as he stands up in court, the representative of universal man, and hear him as he pleads for the outcast and the dumb. When asked if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be pronounced upon him, he replies, "Had I so interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends, either father, mother, brother, sister, wife or children, or any of that class, and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right. Every man in court would have declared it an act worthy of reward, rather than of punishment. This court acknowledge, too, as I suppose, the validity of the law of God. I see a book kissed which I suppose to be the Bible, or, at least, the New Testament, which teaches me that, all 'things whatsoever I would that men should do to me, I should do even so to them.' It teaches me further, to 'remember them that are in bonds as being bound with them.' I endeavored to act up to that instruction. I say I am yet too young to learn that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to interfere as I have done, in behalf of his despised poor, is no wrong, but right. Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children, and with the blood of millions in this slave country, whose rights are disregarded by unkind, unjust and cruel enactments, I say let it be done."

Search the biographies of the *brave* and *great* of *any* age in the world's history, and you *shall not find sublimer utterances.*

But did he maintain his self-possession, his integrity, his love of man, and his faith in Truth and God, during the long days of his imprisonment, which intervened between the sentence and his execution? Read any of his numerous letters written to his friends, when under sentence of death, and you shall find that they all breathe the same spirit of lofty devotion to the right, the same cheerful resignation to the will

of his Divine Master, added to which is the bright and joyous hope of a glorious immortality beyond the grave.

In writing to his old teacher, Rev. H. L. Vaill, of Connecticut, he says: "I wish I could write you about a few only of the interesting times I have experienced with different classes of men, clergymen among others. Christ, the great Captain of Liberty as well as of Salvation, and who began His mission as foretold of Him, by proclaiming it, saw fit to take from me a sword of steel, after I had carried it for a time; but He has put another in my hand, 'the sword of the spirit,' and I pray God to make me a faithful soldier wherever He may send me, not less on the scaffold than when surrounded by my warmest sympathizers." In another part of the same letter he says, "Notwithstanding 'my soul is among lions,' yet I believe that 'God in very deed is with me.' You will not, therefore, feel surprised when I tell you that I am 'joyful in my tribulations;' that I do not feel condemned of Him, whose judgment is just, nor of my own conscience. Nor do I feel degraded by my imprisonment, my chains, nor the prospect of the gallows. I have not only been (though utterly unworthy) permitted to 'suffer affliction with God's people,' but have also had a great many rare opportunities for 'preaching righteousness in the great congregation.' I trust it will not be all lost." Again he says, "I have passed under the rod of Him whom I call my Father (and certainly no son ever needed it oftener), and yet I have enjoyed much of life, as I was enabled to discover the secret of this somewhat early. It has been in making the prosperity and happiness of others my own; so that I have really had a good deal of prosperity. I am very prosperous still, and am looking forward to the time when 'peace on earth and good will to men' shall everywhere prevail. I have no murmuring thoughts or anxious feeling to fret my mind. 'I'll praise my Maker with my breath.'"

To a young friend in New York, he wrote, "I do not feel myself in the least degraded by my imprisonment, or chains, or in prospect of the gallows. Man cannot imprison, or chain, or hang the soul. I go joyfully in behalf of millions who 'have no rights' that this *great and glorious* this *Christian Republic* 'are bound to respect.'"

Can it be, my hearers, that such a man, one who could thus speak, write and triumph, with the gallows in full view, is dead? 'Tis even so. He has been slain that *hoary-headed wrong* and *bloody despotism* might live. And ten days ago, his noble, faithful wife, waited and wept at Charlestown until the *DARK deed of murder* was consummated in the name of *American law*, and then receiving his mangled corpse, she bore it tenderly to her desolate, O, how desolate home!

I quote from the *New York Independent* so much of its report of Mr. Brown's interview with his wife and of his execution as seems desirable on the present occasion:

"Before Mrs. Brown was admitted to her husband, General Taliaferro asked Mr. Brown 'How long he desired the interview to last,' to

which the old man replied, 'Not long, sir, three or four hours will be long enough.'

'I am very sorry,' said the officer, 'not to oblige you, but Mrs. Brown must return to Harper's Ferry to-night; still, I will allow her to remain as long as possible.'

'Execute your orders, sir,' said Captain Brown, composedly; 'I have no favor to ask of the State of Virginia.'

As the interview was in presence of the jailer, Mrs. Brown, with a woman's delicacy, began speaking in a low voice, so as not to be overheard. The old Captain, with a smile, said, 'Speak loud! Mary, speak loud!'

When for a few moments she yielded to her feelings and sobbed convulsively, he laid his hand upon her gently, saying with great kindness in his tone and marvelous composure in his manner, 'Cheer up, Mary, cheer up!'

In referring to the expected event of the next day, he said he looked forward to it with great calmness. He was prepared to submit to his fate without a murmur. He had the comforting consciousness that he would die for the right, and this to him took away all terror from death.

At this point General Taliaferro announced that the interview must close, and Mrs. Brown immediately prepared to return to Harper's Ferry. The old man exclaimed as she went out, 'God bless you and your children;' to which she replied, 'God have mercy on you,' and so the husband and the wife parted, never more to meet in this world.

On the entrance of General Taliaferro to announce to the prisoner when he should prepare for execution, Captain Brown looked up from his pen and ink, and asked, 'What is to be the hour, General?' 'Eleven o'clock,' was the reply. 'Well, I will try and finish in time,' said the old man coolly, and returned to spend the last few moments at his writing.

At eleven o'clock Captain Brown was led out of his cell by Sheriff Campbell and Captain Avis, with their assistants. He was conducted to the cells of the other prisoners that he might have a moment's interview with each before his death. He first met Copeland and Green, to whom he said, 'Stand up like men, and do not betray your friends.'

The prisoner was then taken to Stephens' cell. The two fellow-prisoners kindly exchanged greetings. Stephens said, 'Good by, Captain, I know you are going to a better land.' Brown replied, 'I know I am.'

Captain Brown told the Sheriff that he was ready. He was led to the door, and received by his military escort. He had on his head a dark felt hat, and was dressed in the same clothes which he had worn in prison. On his feet he wore a pair of red slippers. He was assisted into a furniture wagon, where he quietly took a seat on the box which contained his coffin. The wagon was drawn by two white horses.

While riding along toward the scaffold, Mr. Sadler, the undertaker, remarked, 'Captain Brown, you are a cheerful man — more cheerful than I am to-day.' 'Yes,' replied the Captain, 'I have great reason to be cheerful.' Then, casting his eye over the field and the great display of preparations, he said, 'I see that all persons are excluded from the field except the military; I am sorry that the citizens are shut out.' On entering further into the field, as the wide landscape began to open before him, he rose to his feet, and straightening himself to his full height, he exclaimed, 'This is a beautiful country; I have never seen it before!'

He ascended the stairs, and advanced with a quick and elastic tread, showing that his courage only grew greater as the end drew near. What man of those five thousand witnesses, in the uniform of soldiers, was half so brave as John Brown? He threw off his felt hat gracefully, and ran his hand through his gray hair. He cast a glance about him, principally in the direction of the people in the distance. Then, turning to his jailer, he remarked, 'Sir, I have no words to thank you for your kindness.' This was his grateful farewell to a man who had treated him from the beginning of his imprisonment to the end, with great courtesy and friendliness.

No clergyman attended him in his last hours. He would accept no religious rites from men who defended slavery as a divine institution. As no anti-slavery minister was to be found in the neighborhood, he preferred to have none at all.

His elbows and ankles were then pinioned, the rope — a slender tarred hemp cord — was adjusted around his neck; and the white cowl drawn over his head. The Sheriff requested him to step forward on the trap. 'I cannot see,' he replied, 'you must lead me.' He was accordingly led a few steps forward. The prisoner was now subjected to ten minutes' suspense, in this attitude on the gallows, in order that a military display might be made to gratify the Virginian troops! The soldiers marched, counter-marched, and took position as if in face of an imaginary enemy — the prisoner, meanwhile standing bound, blinded, and on the edge of death! Captain Avis asked, 'Are you tired?' To which the undaunted old man replied from underneath his linen shroud, 'No, not tired; but don't keep me waiting longer than is necessary.' The Sheriff asked him if he would hold a handkerchief in his hand to drop as a signal when he was ready. He replied, 'No, I do not want it; but do not detain me longer than is absolutely necessary.'

His example of courage and faith is almost without a parallel. His letters, his conversation, and his personal demeanor, bear witness to a moral character so high and grand that common men, compared with him in respect to all noble and moral qualities, seem scarcely more than children. No man has ever produced upon this nation so profound an impression for moral heroism. He made this impression at the first, but every act he performed, and every word he uttered until

the day of his execution, only confirmed and increased the power of his example. He grew greater and greater unto the end. He was greatest at the last, when most men would have been weakest."

Forcibly, indeed do the circumstances of his execution recall the death of the Marquis of Montrose, whose martyrdom on the scaffold has been celebrated in Aytoun's "Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers:"

They brought him to the Watergate,  
 Hard bound with hempen span,  
 As though they held a lion there,  
 And not a fenceless man.  
 They sat him high upon a cart—  
 The hangman rode below—  
 They drew his hands behind his back,  
 And bared his noble brow.  
 \* \* \* \* \*

It would have made a brave man's heart  
 Grow sick and sad that day,  
 To watch the keen, malignant eyes  
 Bent down on that array.  
 \* \* \* \* \*

"He is coming! he is coming!"—  
 Like a bridegroom from his room  
 Came the hero from his prison  
 To the scaffold and the doom.  
 There was glory on his forehead,  
 There was lustre in his eye,  
 And he never walked to battle  
 More proudly than to die;  
 There was color in his visage,  
 Though the cheeks of all were wan,  
 And they marveled as they saw him pass—  
 That great and goodly man!

But when he came, though pinioned fast,  
 He looked so great and high,  
 So noble was his manly front,  
 So calm his steadfast eye—  
*The rabble rout forbore to shout,*  
 And each man held his breath,  
 For well they knew the hero's soul  
 Was face to face with death.  
 And then a mournful shudder  
 Through all the people crept,  
*And some that came to scoff at him,*  
*Now turned aside and wept.*  
 But he looked upon the heavens,  
 And they were clear and blue,  
*And in the liquid ether*  
*The eye of God shone through!*  
 \* \* \* \* \*

He mounted up the scaffold,  
 And turned him to the crowd;  
*But they dared not trust the people,*  
*So he might not speak aloud.*



The grim Geneva ministers  
 With anxious scowl drew near,  
 As you have seen the ravens flock  
 Around the dying deer.  
*He would not deign them word nor sign,  
 But alone he bent the knee;*  
 And veiled his face for Christ's dear grace  
 Beneath the gallows-tree.  
 \* \* \* \* \*

A beam of light fell o'er him  
 Like a glory round the shriven,  
 And he climbed the lofty ladder  
 As it were the path to heaven.

The once noble form of the departed hero and Christian patriot sleeps sweetly in the silent tomb. But his soul has gone to that land where the bondman is free from the master, and where the voice of lamentation gives place to the song of praise. Aye, he has gone where the outgoing of his great and loving heart brings not peril, but increased joy; where every generous and loving impulse finds a response in the bosom of all who tread with him the fields of everlasting life and immortal beauty.

Let us rejoice, not only "That man cannot imprison, or chain or hang the soul," but that he cannot blot from the record of history the testimony of the brave and good against wrong; for then would the death of John Brown be an irreparable loss to humanity. But now shall his speech before the court, his letters written in prison, and the record of his heroic, his sublime death, be handed down as a choice legacy to our children.

He shall indeed be "A favorite of history." Aye, more — poets shall perform pilgrimages to the place of his tragic death, to catch the inspiration which breathes *anew on the banks of the Potomac*, that they may tune to *sweeter, loftier* strains the Lyre of Liberty.

But we may not on the present occasion longer hold converse with *Freedom's chosen martyr*. But ere we bid him adieu, let us, in the presence of the Great and Impartial Father of all, breathe the *solemn* vow, that whatever may betide us, we will "Remember those in bonds as bound with them;" remembering that —

"Whether on the scaffold high,  
 Or in the battle's van,  
 The fittest place for man to die,  
 Is where he dies for man."

# HUMBOLDT COLLEGE.

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This Institution, located at Springvale, Iowa, was founded in 1869, and has now (in 1872), in buildings and endowments, over \$100,000.

Its character is set forth in the following extracts from the articles of incorporation.

"We, whose names are hereto subscribed, recognizing the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, associate ourselves for the purpose of encouraging liberal Education by the establishment and maintenance at Springvale, Humboldt County, Iowa, of an Institution for the education of youth in Literature, Science, and enlightened Christian Morality, without regard to sex, race, or religious sect.

The fundamental object of this Association is to establish and maintain an educational Institution which shall be forever free from sectarian control, and no change shall ever be made in its character in this respect without the expressed consent of all its donors and the return to all contributors, their heirs, executors, or assigns, who shall request the same, of all funds by them contributed, together with legal interest on the same."

## OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

*President* — Stephen H. Taft.

*Vice - President* — Ira L. Welch.

*Treasurer* — John Dickey.

*Secretary* — J. N. Prouty.

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Of this Institution the Rev. Dr. Morrison, of Boston, who by appointment, visited Iowa in 1871 to investigate and report upon its character and claims, says:

"The conclusions to which I have come in regard to Humboldt College are these:

The people who have the enterprise in hand are honest, competent, and thoroughly in earnest, and will carry it on wisely and economically if the necessary funds are provided.

The location which they have chosen is peculiarly favorable to such an enterprise. An unsectarian college established there, and liberally endowed, will for centuries have a great and important influence through that whole region of almost boundless fertility."

"I feel a deep interest in Humboldt College, believing that it sustains an important relation to the political, moral, and religious welfare of a large section of our common country." — *Wendell Phillips*.

"I thoroughly endorse the educational enterprise represented by my friend, the Rev. S. H. Taft." — *Rev. Edward Everett Hale*.

A beautiful stone building costing \$40,000 is nearly completed, the

corner stone of which was laid in the Autumn of 1870, the principal address on the occasion being delivered by Chief Justice Cole.

The following is the introductory address of Rev. Mr. Taft :

"Friends of Education, the highest honor of which I have ever been made the recipient was the assurance of the Divine favor by which I was permitted to call God my Heavenly Father, and know myself as an accepted child of His. Next to this was the honor of knowing that God heard and answered my prayer when in deep solicitude I besought His blessing upon my efforts to found Humboldt College. God answered my prayer by giving me the confidence, sympathy, and aid of noble men and women in the East, without which the scenes and facts of to-day could never have cheered our hearts. I accept also as a distinguished honor, the position assigned me in the deeply interesting exercises of this day. It is an honor to lay the corner stone of an institution bearing the immortal name of Humboldt—an institution which is not only to live through coming years, but to gather increasing strength and beauty from each succeeding age. But the chief honor which crowns this hour arises from the fact that Humboldt College is to be an unsectarian and truly Christian institution, practically recognizing at its birth the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, by recognizing the sacred rights and obligations of *all*, without distinction of religious sect, race or sex. And such is the faith of its founders in the purity, sublimity and power of Christianity, that they ask no legislation for its protection, either from State, Church or School. While religious forms and beliefs may change, and ought by reason of increasing light and enlarged experience to change, Humboldt College will teach that the center of Christian life—its *soul* (the care and love of God for man, as comprehensively expressed in the life and death of Christ, and the duty and privilege of man to love, obey and trust in God, as taught by Christ), will remain changeless through all changes and glorious through all time.

We see before us to-day the walls of a single edifice in the midst of grounds surpassingly beautiful, yet without ornamentation. In the distant years I see numerous buildings, in the midst of flowers, fountains and stately trees. In that day Humboldt College shall be known as one of the leading institutions of the world. Hundreds are here present to-day. Tens of thousands shall gather here a hundred years hence, to commemorate the birth of the Institution, and rejoice in the blessings it shall have conferred. From successive generations shall come to this temple of learning young men and women to seek and obtain that physical, mental, scholastic and moral training which shall prepare them for usefulness and happiness here, and a glorious immortality in the future life. But I will not longer trespass upon the time that belongs to the distinguished gentleman who is to address us on this occasion, but will proceed to the pleasant duty of laying the corner stone, after which we shall have the privilege of listening to the Hon. C. C. Cole, Chief Justice of Iowa."

















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